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ALVAN F. SANBORN.

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#### RESTLESS FRENCH CANADA.

IT was a French Canadian premier who declared, amid deafening plaudits, that the last gun in defence of British connection would be fired by a French Canadian gunner. His ardor was rewarded by his sovereign, who promptly created him a knight and aide-de-camp on her personal staff. The Dominion has not grown very old since that patriotic period was pronounced, and yet it is from the lips of two prominent leaders of the French Canadians, the one a Liberal ex-premier, the other a Conservative ex-lieutenant-governor, that the severing of the imperial tie, and separation from the British flag, are urged, with more or less eloquence of phrase. True both statesmen are out of a job at present. It is also true that the voice which pleaded with such rhetorical effect for the continuance of the old relationship belonged to one who occupied a high and lucrative office. A few years ago no responsible Canadian leader would have faced the electors with the cry of Independence. To day no English leader would attempt it. And yet the loyalty of French Canada seems, on the surface, to be sincere. A chief, high in the esteem of the French Liberals, once said, "France gave us life, but England gave us liberty, freedom, and self-government." The outburst caused applause, and there was waving of handkerchiefs, while the more emotional in the audience shed tears. Not long ago Frechette's drama of "Papineau" was produced in Quebec City. The heroic and patriotic passages, of which there are many in the play, were applauded. The English military officers, prototypes of those remarkable warriors familiar to the spectators of an Irish drama, were, of course, hissed whenever they presented themselves. Their loyal sentiments were greeted by the youths in the galleries with execrations loud and deep. The feeling evoked doubtless was inherited from their cradles. And yet those half-grown boys would willingly fight to maintain the Canadian constitution. The devotion of the French Canadians, as a whole, to Great Britain, despite the invectives of the demagogues, is strong. The Church, always wise where her own interests are concerned, encourages British connection, and teaches her flock to obey the laws and respect the authorities. In 1837 the Church sided with the English oppressors. At an earlier time, when the marauder appeared on the scene, and put temptation in the way, the powerful arm of the hierarchy was raised aloft, and again it triumphed. The Church in Canada understands her people. She thinks for many of them. But her own safety is her first thought. The peace of Paris gave civil liberty to the people of Quebec, but, says Parkman, "the conqueror left their religious system untouched, and through it they have imposed upon themselves a weight of ecclesiastical tutelage that finds few equals in the most Catholic countries of Europe. Such guardianship is not without

certain advantages." "But," he adds, "when faithfully exercised it aids to uphold some of the tamer virtues, if that can be called a virtue which needs the constant presence of a sentinel to keep it from escaping; but it is fatal to the mental robustness and moral courage; and if French Canada would fulfil its aspirations it must cease to be one of the most priest-ridden communities of the modern world."

The dead-lock between Upper and Lower Canada, in 1865, was the real father of confederation. English Protestant Ontario and French Catholic Quebec were at loggerheads continually. Practically, there were two premiers. Complications arose frequently, and union with the other provinces became a necessity. Two years later Nova Scotia and New Brunswick entered the confederacy, and there was peace for a time, a coalition government being the result of the compact. Later, the other provinces, saving the colony of Newfoundland, became part of the Dominion. After a quarter of a century of union, during which two rebellions in the Northwest broke out and were suppressed at great cost, Canada finds herself with a problem which cannot be solved off-hand. It involves nothing less than the future of the British Possessions on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Imperial Federation having died still-born, may be dismissed. In the brightest days of the project no feasible plan was ever proposed by the apostles of the movement, and though opinion was much against the idea in English Canada, French Canada produced but one supporter of the cause, and he was lukewarm, and begged for completer information. Three other plans are suggested, viz.: The continuance of the present Colonial system, Independence, and Annexation to the United States. The *status quo* is favored by the English generally. The French Canadian clergy—moving ever deliberately towards change of any sort—likewise desire to keep intact the present state of things. A million French Canadians are already domiciled in the States. They are frugal and industrious and make good citizens. The Church, however, would keep them at home, but they naturally go whither they can better their fortunes. Life in the Republic, the *curés* think, is far more liable to temptation than life in the little Canadian parishes. Certain it is, the exiled French Canadian youth loses much of that veneration and respect for the clergy which he had always at home, where he doffed his cap to the holy father as he passed him on the road, and the sombre soutane filled a large place in his eyes. The Church, too, is his first consideration, and his religious duties, learned at school, are never neglected. Across the border, however, he lives under less restraint. He follows the fashions with greater care. He attends mass, of course, but the absence of the full uniform of his ecclesiastical adviser in the streets has an effect upon him which is not entralling. In fact, he soon learns the American art of not venerating the cloth, and this the home clergy greatly dislike. The Church in Canada is secure so long as British connection continues. The people are held in closer communion with it, and no priest would advocate an alteration of the present colonial system.

Independence and annexation may be coupled together, for the adoption of the former would surely lead to the latter.

A generation ago, Baron Lisgar stated in Halifax that should Canada desire separation from the Mother Country, England would not fire a gun to restrain her. He spoke with the full authority and consent of the Colonial Office. His speech was received with mortification by the loyal Nova Scotians, but the wound was soothed when Lord Dufferin arrived in

Canada. This distinguished diplomat immediately began to undo the mischief wrought by his predecessor. He preached the doctrine of British connection and national unity, and urged Canada to be true to the empire and to herself. His successors in turn have taught the same lesson, and of late years the British press, which for decades had practically ignored Canada and the Canadians, have opened their columns for the discussion of Canadian questions. In contrast is the conduct of the Parisian press, which, though they attract the French Canadian heart, yield nothing in return. In France a commissioner for Canada is maintained, and he fills his office worthily, but a French newspaper rarely refers to the life, aspiration, and movement of the distant colony, which once belonged to France.

The pleading for change comes mainly from the French leaders. The rank and file, and particularly those who live in the country, are content to take things as they are. But the leaders demand change whenever they can find a real or a fancied grievance. A year ago, a French leader advocated annexation, but he had been deposed from a high position. His law partner, who had no sins to answer for, was not so open. He only aspired to independence, "not for the satisfaction of a vain sentiment, nor for the gratification of an ideal dream, but because I see also in independence the safeguards of our dearest interests." His chief in Parliament was no less outspoken. And later, we have Mr. Joseph Royal, an ex-lieutenant-governor, demanding independence, and telling us that annexation may, with surety, come afterwards. Another French orator wants Quebec Province to have independence alone, to go out of the Canadian union, and set up an establishment on the banks of the St. Lawrence, "looking to no other beacon of salvation than the citadel of Quebec." Of course, this is sheer nonsense, but it gives an idea of the restless spirit which prevails.

The weakness of French Canada in the Confederation is owing to the tendency of her people to live apart from their English compatriots. They lack the spirit of unity, and the desire to build up a healthy national feeling. They fight persistently to gain petty objects, while the large aims are abandoned. They will quibble over a question of language, and allow the English to win the best things, under their very eyes. Political feeling runs high, and during an election campaign their press ring with vituperation. The editors are quick to invoke the aid of the courts against their contemporaries, while the politicians are as often found defending themselves from charges of slander as they are in bringing causes against their rivals in the same field. The French nurse the idea that the English do not like them. This, however, is wrong. The English see much to admire in their French fellow-citizens, and strive always to cultivate friendly relations with them. But so long as the French people of Canada permit demagogues to inflame their passions, and force them to pull down, instead of building up, the fabric created in 1867, just so long will crises such as the one now raging over the sectarian schools prevail, and destroy that harmony on which so much depends. Independence would put Canada at the mercy of the United States. Annexation would inevitably follow. And the United States would, at once, erect each province into a State, and Quebec would lose what she treasures and values most, the conservation of her laws, her language, and her institutions. The official language of the State of Quebec would be English. The Church would suffer an eclipse, or at least be shorn of much of her power. The Stars and Stripes, and not the tri-color, would fly from the house-tops, and *la mère patrie* would sink, in a few years, to a memory of

the past, when Britain allowed her French colony to do what it pleased, say what it liked, and think what it had a mind to, without uttering a protesting word. Annexation may be the Dominion's political destiny, but it will not be French Canada which will benefit the most by the change of flag and of constitution.

GEORGE STEWART.

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#### THE GOOD-GOVERNMENT CLUBS.

THE importance of the so-called Good-Government Clubs of New York City, as factors in solving the problem of municipal reform, cannot now be denied. Their growth has been so rapid, and the position which they occupy, with relation to the two great national party organizations in the city of New York, is so little understood by the outside public, that it may interest the readers of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* to learn something of these clubs and the results they confidently expect to achieve.

In the first place, it should be understood that the Good-Government Clubs are local organizations, composed of voters in the city of New York, who desire to obtain for their city permanent reform in its government. They derive their membership from all classes and are strictly non-partisan, so far as national politics are concerned. Each club is designated by a letter of the alphabet, and has its headquarters in some particular ward or assembly district of the city. The members residing in a district belong to the club of that district, and such members as may from time to time change their residence are transferred to the club covering the district into which they may move. Each club has its own constitution and board of officers, the constitutions of all the clubs being similar as to their fundamental principles. The members are elected and pay an entrance fee and annual dues. No one is eligible to membership who does not sincerely subscribe to the principles of the Good-Government Clubs.

All the clubs so far organized are banded together under what is known as the Constitution of the Confederated Good-Government Clubs. This constitution provides for a permanent central committee, called a Council, composed of representatives chosen annually by the clubs in the confederation. The powers of this council are prescribed by the constitution, and are confined to dealing with such matters as affect the whole of the city of New York. This leaves to each club complete autonomy in dealing with matters affecting its especial district, and encourages, as well as strengthens, local pride. Several of the clubs already occupy comfortable clubhouses, and everything is done to promote social intercourse among the members. There is a wide diversity in the methods pursued by the clubs in strengthening their organization in their respective districts. They are governed more or less by the conditions and requirements of the locality in which the club may be situated. The work of organizing clubs is still going on in districts of the city not already covered, and the present indications are that by the autumn there will be at least one Good-Government Club in every one of the thirty districts of the city.

To all those who have carefully studied the subject of municipal government in the United States, and the causes that have produced the corrupt and wasteful methods of administration now prevailing in our cities, it has become most evident that "party politics" lies at the root of the evil. It will not be necessary for me to take up space here in setting forth the vari-